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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 002145

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [VE](#)
SUBJECT: MORE POLLING DATA ON RECALL REFERENDUM

REF: CARACAS 2087

CLASSIFIED BY: ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR MARK WELLS FOR REASONS 1.4 (D
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SUMMARY

[¶1.](#) (C) ON JUNE 23, GREENBERG, QUINLAN, ROSNER RESEARCH INC. (GQR) RELEASED THE RESULTS OF ITS NATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION STUDY (REF). COLLECTED AFTER THE REPAROS PROCESS, THE FIGURES SHOW THAT NATIONAL OPINION IS SPLIT 48-TO-48 ON WHETHER TO RECALL PRESIDENT CHAVEZ. NATIONAL OPINION WAS FAVORABLE REGARDING CHAVEZ'S POLICIES TO ADDRESS POVERTY IN VENEZUELA, WITH 62% OF PARTICIPANTS AGREEING THAT THE CHAVEZ ADMINISTRATION IS HELPING THE POOR. GQR DATA ALSO INDICATED THAT MIRANDA GOVERNOR ENRIQUE MENDOZA WAS THE MOST FAVORED OPPOSITION CANDIDATE FOR A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, BUT THAT MENDOZA WAS TRAILING IN AN ELECTION AGAINST CHAVEZ 52-TO-40. POLLING RESEARCH COMPANY MERCANALISIS RELEASED SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FIGURES THAT STATED 54% OF VENEZUELIANS WERE IN FAVOR OF RECALLING CHAVEZ IN THE REFERENDUM AND 33% WERE OPPOSED. MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION JESSE CHACON HAS ASSERTED THAT THE MERCANALISIS DATA ARE FALSE AND HAS TOUTED FIGURES BY THE POLLING COMPANY DATOS, WHICH SHOW CHAVEZ WINNING THE REFERENDUM 51-TO-39. END SUMMARY.

THE GQR POLL: THE REFERENDUM AND APPROVAL RATING

[¶2.](#) (SBU) ON JUNE 23, GREENBERG, QUINLAN, ROSNER RESEARCH INC. (GQR) RELEASED THE RESULTS OF ITS NATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION STUDY. GQR CONDUCTED ITS POLLING IN FOCUS GROUPS AFTER CHAVEZ AGREED TO CONVOKE THE REFERENDUM, BUT HAS NOT INDICATED HOW MANY PARTICIPANTS WERE INVOLVED. THE GQR POLLING DATA SHOWED THAT NATIONAL OPINION IS SPLIT EVENLY 48-TO-48 ON WHETHER TO RECALL PRESIDENT CHAVEZ. GQR FIGURES ALSO INDICATE THAT CHAVEZ HAS A 53-TO-45 PERCENT APPROVAL RATING, BUT THAT NATIONAL OPINION IS MORE EVENLY DIVIDED OVER WHETHER OR NOT CHAVEZ IS LEADING VENEZUELA IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, 42% APPROVAL TO 40% DISAPPROVAL.

THE GQR POLL: CHAVEZ AND THE POOR

[¶3.](#) (SBU) ON ISSUES REGARDING THE VENEZUELAN POOR, CHAVEZ RECEIVED SIGNIFICANTLY STRONGER PUBLIC OPINION FIGURES. SIXTY-TWO PERCENT OF THOSE PARTICIPANTS POLLED BY GQR AGREED THAT THE CHAVEZ ADMINISTRATION IS HELPING THE POOR, WHILE ONLY 36% DISAGREED. ADDITIONALLY, GQR FIGURES INDICATED CHAVEZ'S SOCIAL WELFARE MISSIONS HAVE 58-TO-38 PERCENT APPROVAL RATING. WHEN THE GQR POLLING DATA ON THE RECALL REFERENDUM WAS BROKEN DOWN INTO FIVE INCOME GROUPS, THE TOP FOUR INCOME STRATA WERE IN FAVOR OF RECALLING CHAVEZ. HOWEVER, CHAVEZ WON IN THE LOWEST INCOME GROUP, 59 TO 38 PERCENT.

THE GQR POLL: MENDOZA AND THE OPPOSITION

[¶4.](#) (SBU) THE GQR POLLING DATA INCLUDES FIGURES FOR A POST-REFERENDUM PRIMARY FOR OPPOSITION CANDIDATES, WITH MIRANDA STATE GOVERNOR ENRIQUE MENDOZA LEADING WITH 40%, FOLLOWED BY PRIMERO JUSTICIA PARTY LEADER JULIO BORGES WITH 24%. IN ADDITION TO LEADING PRIMARY POLLING FIGURES, MENDOZA HAS A 52% APPROVAL RATING AND A 34% DISAPPROVAL RATING. HOWEVER, GQR FIGURES FOR A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION BETWEEN CHAVEZ AND MENDOZA SHOW THAT CHAVEZ HAS A COMFORTABLE LEAD AT 52-TO-40.

OTHER POLLS

[¶5.](#) (SBU) OTHER COMPANIES HAVE RELEASED POLLING DATA WITH

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ARE IN FAVOR OF RECALLING CHAVEZ AND 44% ARE OPPOSED. FOR FIGURES RATING THE PRESIDENT'S PERFORMANCE, CHAVEZ DID NOT PERFORM AS WELL AS HE DID IN THE GQR POLL, WITH ONLY A 37% APPROVAL RATING. ADDITIONALLY, 52% PARTICIPANTS POLLED BY CONSULTORES 21 INDICATED THAT, UNDER CHAVEZ, VENEZUELA WAS CURRENTLY HEADED IN THE WRONG DIRECTION. CONSULTORES 21 CONDUCTED ITS POLLING AFTER THE REPAROS PROCESS AND HAD 20,000 PARTICIPANTS.

16. (U) ON JUNE 27, MERCANALISIS RELEASED POLLING FIGURES THAT STATED 54% OF VENEZUELANS WERE IN FAVOR OF RECALLING CHAVEZ IN THE REFERENDUM AND 33% WERE OPPOSED. MERCANALISIS FIGURES ALSO INDICATED THAT CHAVEZ HAS A 51-TO-42 PERCENT APPROVAL RATING. MERCANALISIS CONDUCTED ITS POLLING AFTER THE REPAROS PROCESS AND INTERVIEWED 900 CITIZENS IN VENEZUELA'S FIVE LARGEST METROPOLITAN AREAS.

GOV REACTION

17. (U) MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION JESSE CHACON HAS PUBLICLY ASSERTED THAT THE POLLING DATA PRESENTED BY MERCANALISIS ARE FALSE AND CRITICIZED PRIVATE MEDIA OUTLETS FOR PUBLICIZING THEM. CHACON CONTENDED THAT THE FIGURES PRESENTED BY THE POLLING RESEARCH COMPANIES DATOS AND INDAGA, WHICH SHOW CHAVEZ WINNING THE REFERENDUM 51-TO-39 PERCENT AND 51-TO-42 PERCENT RESPECTIVELY, REPRESENTED MORE TRUTHFUL DATA. CHACON ALSO POINTED OUT THAT EVEN THE FABRICATED MERCANALISIS FIGURES STILL SHOW THAT CHAVEZ HAS A POSITIVE APPROVAL RATING, WHICH HE TOUTED AS AN INDICATION THAT CHAVEZ WILL WIN THE REFERENDUM.

COMMENT

18. (C) THE POLLS DIFFER, BUT WE CAN SEE THAT CHAVEZ IS NOT AS BADLY WOUNDED BY THE CONVOCATION OF THE REFERENDUM AS THE OPPOSITION HAD HOPED. THE SOCIOECONOMIC BREAK DOWN OF THE GQR REFERENDUM FIGURES IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE ALTHOUGH CHAVEZ IS ONLY FAVERED IN THE LOWEST INCOME GROUPING, HE STILL IS TIED IN THE OVERALL POLL. OPPOSITION LEADERS HOPE THAT THERE IS SOME AMOUNT OF "FEAR FACTOR" IN THESE NUMBERS THAT PREVENTS ANTI-CHAVISTAS IN POOR AREAS FROM EXPRESSING THEIR SENTIMENTS. ALTHOUGH THIS COULD HAVE MERIT, CHAVEZ'S CONCERN FOR THE POOR IS SEEN AS GENUINE AND HE STILL MAINTAINS A FAVORABLE OPINION RATING IN NEARLY ALL OF THE POLLING FIGURES. THE SIMPLE FACT IS THAT THE OPPOSITION HAS A REAL HORSE RACE ON ITS HANDS AND NEEDS TO GET TO WORK.

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